Lovely Strange Dark
LIEN NO TOU YORI
"FROM TOWER OF LIEN"
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ONESHOT
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lovelystrangedarkwordpress.com
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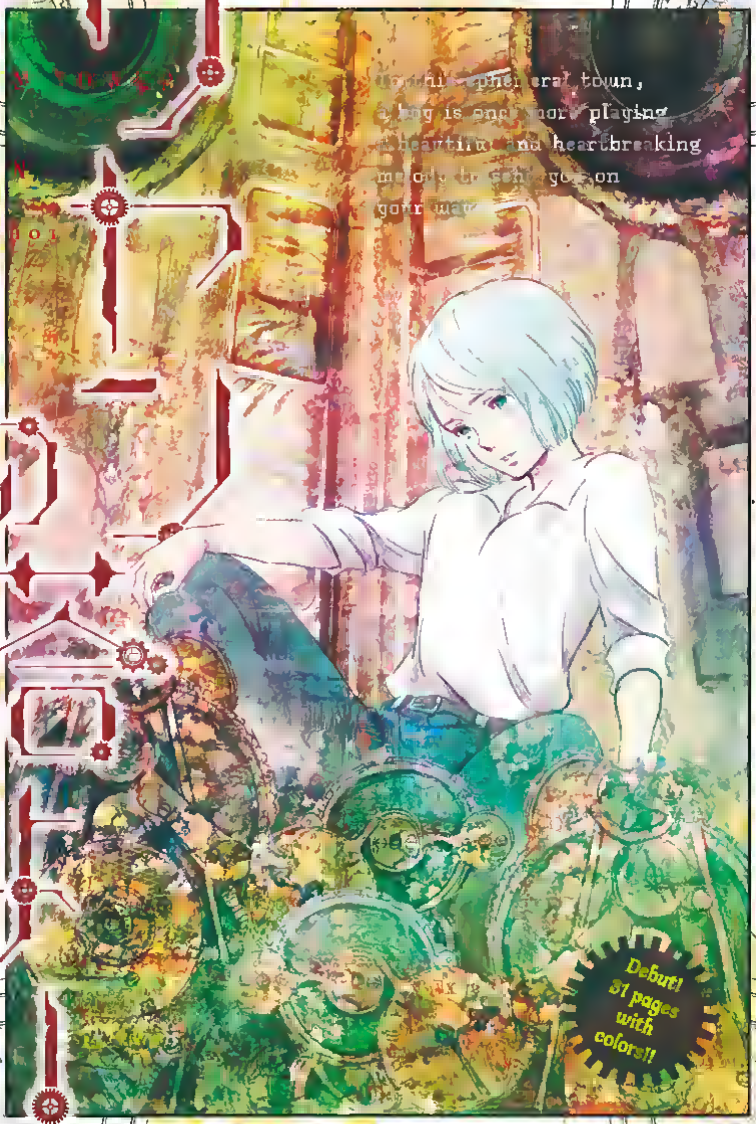
An emotional fantasy drawn by Umeda Abi!!


In this ephemeral town,
a boy is once more playing
a heartfelt and heartbreaking
melody to seal goodbye
upon your wave.
Debut! 31 pages with colors!!

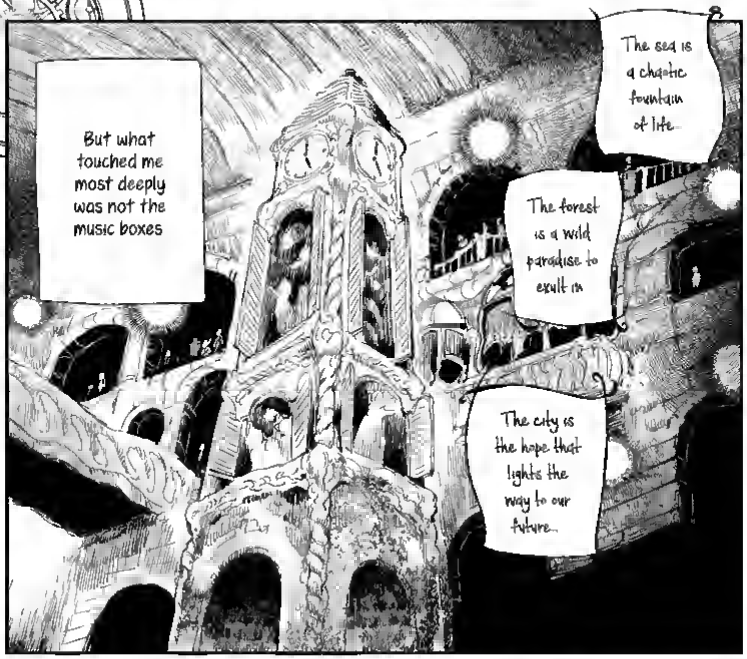
梅田阿比

ABI UMEDA

We called them "auroras."
and so we were illuminated by membranes that gave off light.
The sun didn't reach us in the city.

was in the "arts."
and thus our only solace
We didn't have the sky or sea.

The sky is a graceful canvas of ever-shifting blues.
When you touched the sculptures, a music box would play a melody.
and sculptures standing in the alleyways.
There were scenic paintings illuminated by "auroras."


But what touched me most deeply was not the music boxes
The sea is a chaotic fountain of life...
The forest is a wild paradise to exult in
The city is the hope that lights the way to our future...

Oh.
it's that boy

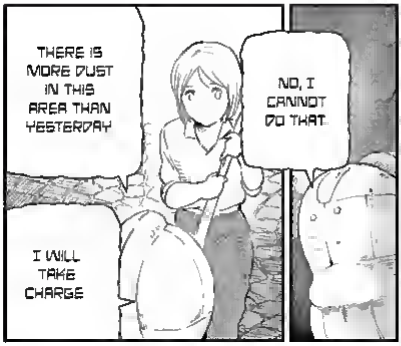
rich

Our city's mechanical clock tower came to life in the evening.
First the bell chimed.
then four windows opened...
and within them mechanical dolls danced
After ringing the bell, the boy went to the piano at the bottom of the tower
and played pieces such as "La Campanella" and "Clair de Lune."
He only ever made small mistakes... and very rarely at that.

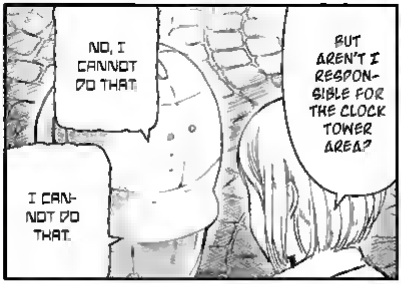
FWSH
BROTH-ER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING..!?
ding
plang
twng
CRAP!
IT WAS THAT KID..!
WHO DID THAT?

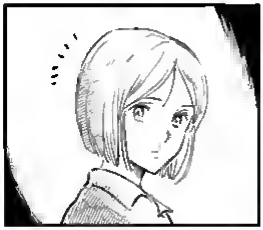
YOU'RE SWOONING OVER HIM!
SNAP OUT OF IT!
HOLD IT!
HEY!
THAT KID..
HE ISN'T HUMAN!
thnk
thnk

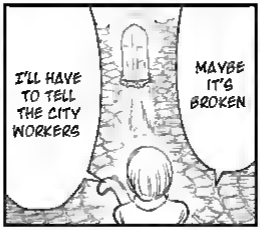
SOON ENOUGH...
WE'LL GO TOO...
THAT'S A LOT OF LUGGAGE.
DISTRICT THREE IS HEADING OUT TOMORROW.
REAL SKY AND REAL SEA,
FORESTS AND CITIES ON THE SURFACE...
I'LL GET TO SEE THEM WITH MY OWN EYES...


THERE IS MORE DUST IN THIS AREA THAN YESTERDAY
NO, I CANNOT DO THAT
I WILL TAKE CHARGE

GOOD MORNING
I'LL CLEAN THIS AREA
WHI——RR


NO, I CANNOT DO THAT
BUT AREN'T I RESPON-SIBLE FOR THE CLOCK TOWER AREA?
I CAN-NOT DO THAT




MAYBE IT'S BROKEN
I'LL HAVE TO TELL THE CITY WORKERS

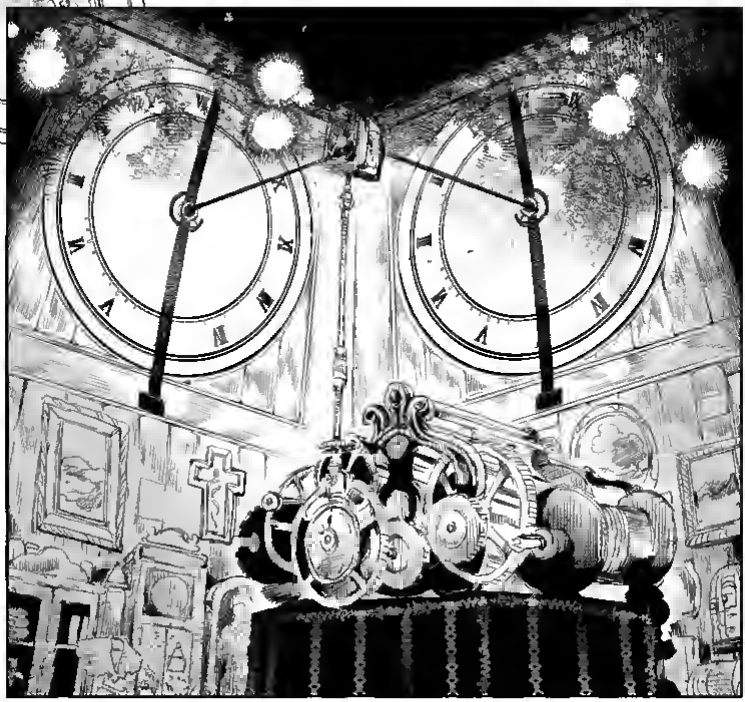
I CAN-NOT DO THAT
CAN-NOT...
WHIRR
CAN-NOOO-OOOO-OOOO-OOO

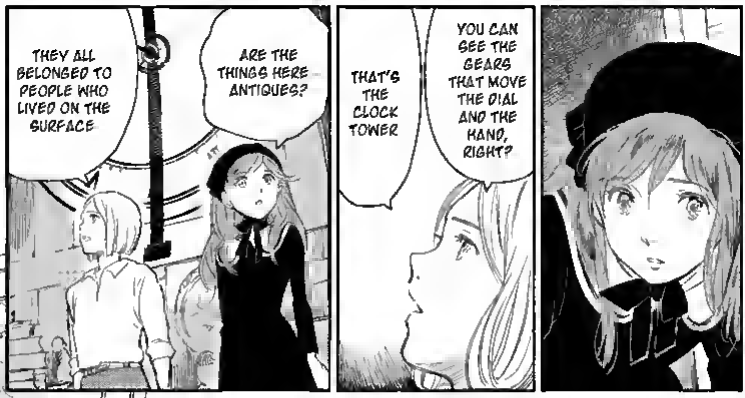
I'M FROM DISTRICT 15
DISTRICT 15 IS SUPPOSED TO MIGRATE TO THE SURFACE IN A WEEK
THOSE OF SCHOOLING AGE SHOULD BE IN CLASS NOW
SCHOOL'S SUSPENDED SO WE CAN PREPARE FOR THE MOVE
THIS CLOCK TOWER IS A CULTURAL ASSET THAT WAS BUILT ON THE SURFACE IN THE OLD DAYS AND LATER DISASSEMBLED AND MOVED HERE
IT'S AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF "ART"
THE TOWER IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE CITY'S SURFACE ANTIQUITIES DEPARTMENT
PEOPLE CANNOT ENTER WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE CITY
DON'T GO IN THERE
THE PUBLIC ISN'T ALLOWED INSIDE THE CLOCK TOWER
ARE YOU

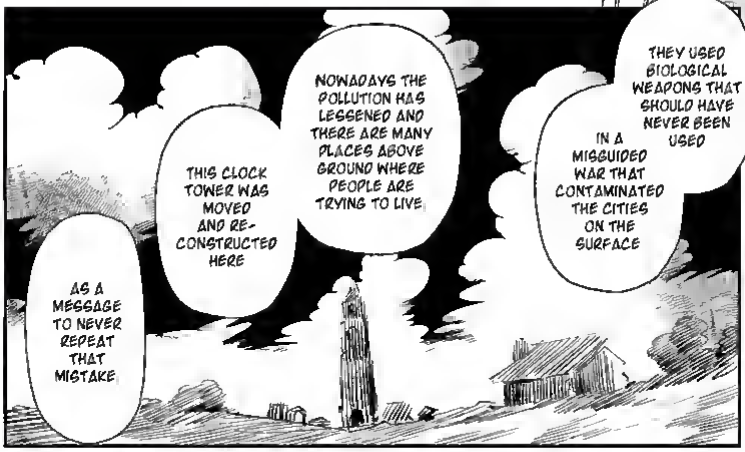
NO,
I'M A HUMANOID.
HUMAN?
EVEN BEFORE THEN I COULD ALWAYS HEAR THE BELL FROM THIS TOWER RINGING, EVEN IN DISTRICT 15—
I FIRST NOTICED YOU FOUR YEARS AGO
—
SO— SINCE IT WAS MY LAST TIME, I BROUGHT MY BROTHER ALONG YESTERDAY
DISTRICT 15 MOVES OUT IN A WEEK
BUT I SHOULD HAVE NOTICED THAT YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL IN THESE PAST FOUR YEARS
Is something I never forgot
The first time I saw you ring the bell and play piano—

MY OUTWARD APPEARANCE MIMICS THE HUMAN FORM IN GREAT DETAIL, ENOUGH THAT I CAN BE MISTAKEN FOR THE REAL THING.
I APOLOGIZE FOR MIS-LEADING YOU.
YEAH, RIGHT!
DASH
YOU CAN'T EVEN FEEL SORRY...!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
-SINCE YOU AREN'T HUMAN
THAT SHOULDN'T BE EMBARRAS-SING.
YOU DON'T FEEL ANYTHING, RIGHT?

TAP
TAP
TAP
DON'T GO UP THERE
IT IS EMBARRASSING!!
...
WHAT IS THIS?
DON'T GO UP THERE
THIS GOES UP
THAT'S THE WEIGHT THAT GENERATES THE CLOCK'S MOVEMENTS
DON'T TOUCH IT

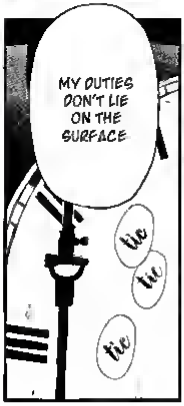


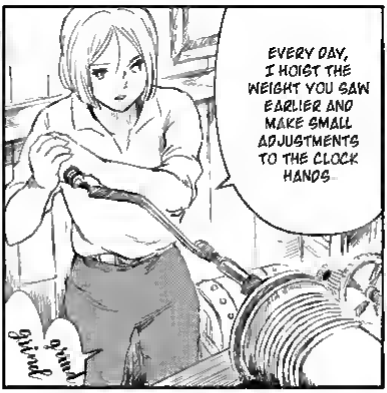

ARE THE THINGS HERE ANTIQUES?
THEY ALL BELONGED TO PEOPLE WHO LIVED ON THE SURFACE
YOU CAN SEE THE GEARS THAT MOVE THE DIAL AND THE HAND, RIGHT?
THAT'S THE CLOCK TOWER


THEY USED BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS THAT SHOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN USED IN A MISGUIDED WAR THAT CONTAMINATED THE CITIES ON THE SURFACE
NOWADAYS THE POLLUTION HAS LESSENED AND THERE ARE MANY PLACES ABOVE GROUND WHERE PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO LIVE
THIS CLOCK TOWER WAS MOVED AND RE-CONSTRUCTED HERE
AS A MESSAGE TO NEVER REPEAT THAT MISTAKE

CAN YOU GO TO THE SURFACE, TOO?

SOON ENOUGH THIS CLOCK TOWER'S JOB WILL BE DONE
THE BELL RANG ON AS EVERYONE AWAITED THE REVIVAL OF THE WORLD ABOVE

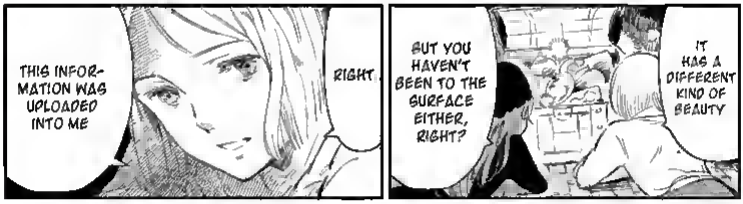

MY DUTIES DON'T LIE ON THE SURFACE
tic
tic
tic

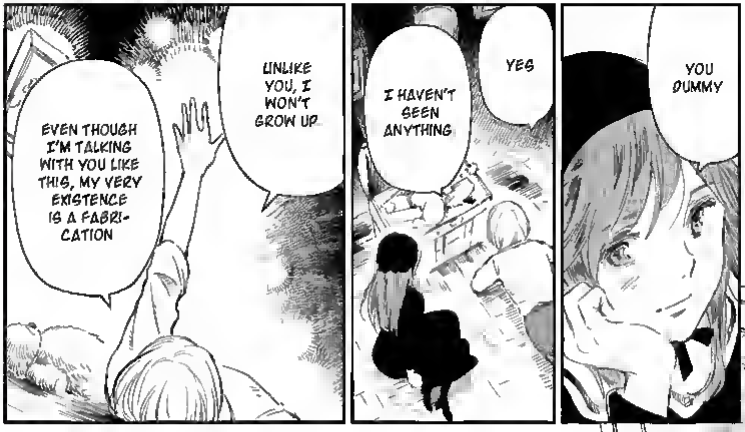

EVERY DAY, I HOIST THE WEIGHT YOU SAW EARLIER AND MAKE SMALL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CLOCK HANDS
grind
grind

MY JOB IS TO MANAGE THE CLOCK TOWER AND KEEP THE PEOPLE IN THIS UNDERGROUND CITY AWARE OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME
click

YOU'RE SHAKING
I'M SCARED
HEY, MAYBE I COULD STAY HERE AND WORK ON THE CLOCK TOO
...
THIS UNDER-GROUND CITY
IS A WELCOMING CAVERN FILLED WITH BEAUTIFUL THINGS
THIS CITY
I LIKE IT HERE
FINE HAIR THAT SHINES,
AND SMALL FINGERS FOR PLAYING THE PIANO
...
DELICATE AND SO VERY BEAUTIFUL
IS "ART"
EVERY-ONE LIVING IN THIS CITY

IF YOU WERE TO GO OUT INTO THE VAST SUNLIGHT,
EVERY LAST THING WOULD JUMP OUT AT YOU.
THAT WORLD IS WILD AND POWERFUL.
LOOK
..WHEN YOU'RE IN A ROOM THAT'S DARK AND SMALL..
click
ANYTHING THAT HAS A LITTLE SHINE STANDS OUT AND LOOKS BEAUTIFUL.


THIS INFORMATION WAS UPLOADED INTO ME
RIGHT.
BUT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE SURFACE EITHER, RIGHT?
IT HAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BEAUTY

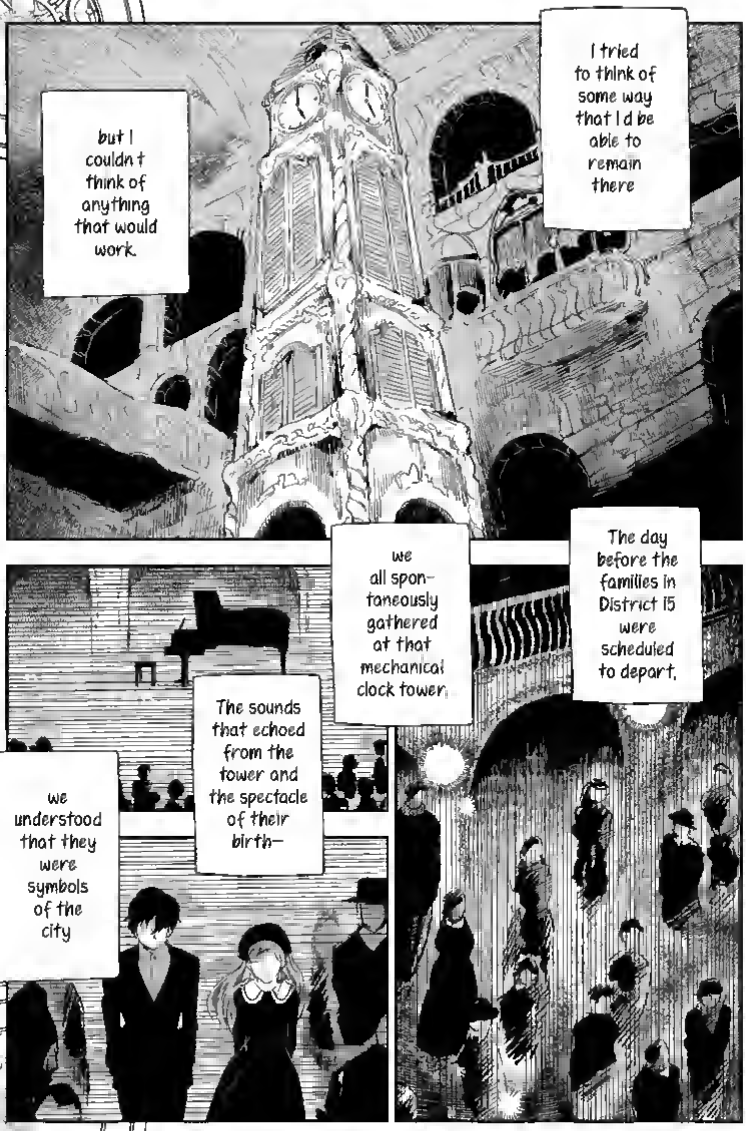

EVEN THOUGH I'M TALKING WITH YOU LIKE THIS, MY VERY EXISTENCE IS A FABRICATION
UNLIKE YOU, I WON'T GROW UP.
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING.
YES
YOU DUMMY

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM
WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF GOING TO THE SURFACE,
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL
I'M JEALOUS
TO NOT FEEL ANYTHING
I WISH I COULD BE YOU
Gears that feel nothing,
mechanics that don't grow
He was... symbolic of the city itself—

I HAVE DETECTED A DECLINE IN YOUR MOOD
YOUR CURRENT STATE IS "MELANCHOLY"
I ADVISE A TEA OF ST JOHN'S WORT LAVENDER AND MARJORAM.
IT CAN BE DELIVERED IN TWO DAYS
WE'RE NOT BUYING
HERE'S WHY WE SHUT OFF THE ANNOYING AURORA PANELS
WE'LL BE OUT OF HERE SOON
MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER YOUR INFORMATION WITH THIS THING
...
I'M NOT GOING

I'M NOT GOING TO THE SURFACE
I'LL RING THE BELL WITH THAT KID,
AND I'LL PLAY THE PIANO...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I WANT TO KEEP ON DOING THE SAME THING
FROM NOW UNTIL EVERYONE HAS LEFT—
EVEN WHEN I BECOME AN OLD LADY
AND THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO SEE,
I'LL KEEP ON RINGING THE BELL IN THIS UNDERGROUND COCOON

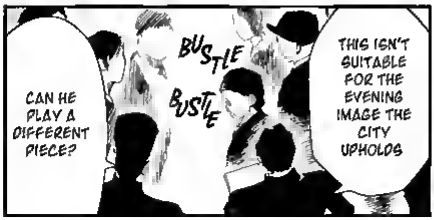
DONG


I tried to think of some way that I'd be able to remain there
but I couldn't think of anything that would work.
The day before the families in District 15 were scheduled to depart,
we all spontaneously gathered at that mechanical clock tower.
The sounds that echoed from the tower and the spectacle of their birth—
we understood that they were symbols of the city

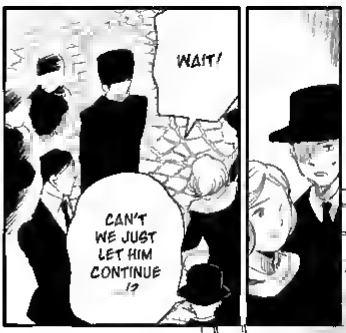
Our city's mechanical clock tower come to life in the evening
First the bell chimed,
then four windows opened
and within them mechanical dolls danced
After ringing the bell, the boy went to the piano at the bottom of the tower
and played pieces such as "La Campanella" and "Clair de Lune"
WHAT IS THIS...?
IT'S NOT THE USUAL

...
IS HE PLAYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE HEARD IT.

THE "REVOLUTIONARY ÉTUDE"...
IT'S...


CAN HE PLAY A DIFFERENT PIECE?
BUSTLE
BUSTLE
THIS ISN'T SUITABLE FOR THE EVENING IMAGE THE CITY UPHOLDS

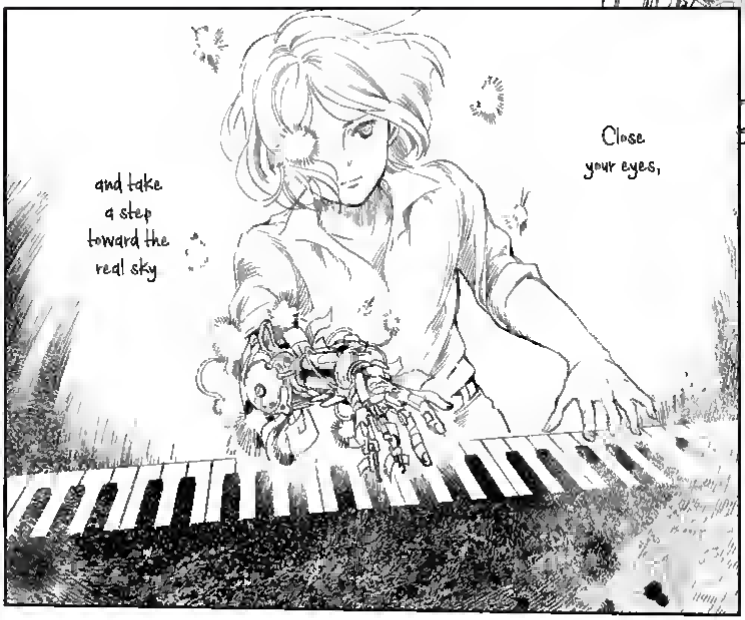
HE'S PLAYING VIOLENTLY
IS THERE AN ERROR IN HIS PROGRAMMING?


WAIT!
CAN'T WE JUST LET HIM CONTINUE!?

for getting into my sister's head like that...
It's his own fault...
...
Wait, is that really it...?
He's like this because I removed a part from his arm
This is different
You don't act like this when you're broken do you?

This song of revolution
Can you hear the footsteps?
scatters the chiming of the bell like pebbles,
It burns away the journal of our past that's bound with his hair,
and melts the fragments of a dark gray cross hidden inside our pinkies
breaking apart the dirt that clings to our ankles and holds us down

and their roar is the sound of our departure.
These oscillating waves echo around us,
It is a dazzling symbol
that will rise and disappear into the agate sky above us
OH!


Close your eyes,
and take a step toward the real sky

Even now no one has forgotten that final performance of yours.

Were you truly a machine that couldn't understand our feelings?
Even now no one knows the truth of it, and yet...
It was your music that turned our hearts toward the surface

This year after many decades, humanity has completed the migration from the underground cities to the outside world.
I am now living under the vast sky and clouds.
Rather than spending my whole life sounding the bell in that nostalgic city with you, I grew old out here.
But the town I'm in now has become a lovely place as well
Much has happened since I came to the surface.
But no matter what happened, I overcame it.

Yes, I heard it the entire time.
I heard the chiming of your bell and the sound of your piano
In each step I took away from the tower in that invaluable city
END